



Artwork by Megan M, 2023

The Seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

[Article BY RHETT VORSTER](#) APRIL 3, 2016; ACCESSED MAY 28, 2023

The seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a registered trademark. The seal is comprised of the symbol, the basic components of which are cross, scripture, a descending dove at the upper part of the cross, and flames on either side of the lower part of the cross, and the name of the denomination, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), encircles the symbol. It was designed by Malcolm Grear and Associates.

The Seal: A Closer Look

The seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a symbolic statement of the church's heritage, identity, and mission in contemporary form. Its power depends on both its simplicity and complexity, as well as its traditional and enduring qualities.

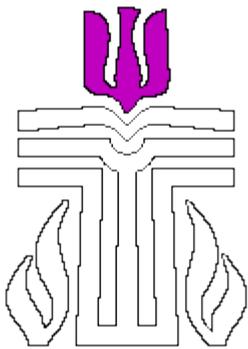
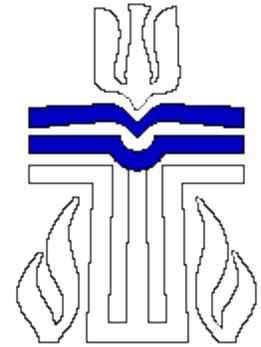
The basic symbols in the seal are the cross, Scripture, the dove, and flames. The dominant structural and theological element in the design is the cross — the universal and most ecumenical symbol of the Christian church. The cross represents the incarnate love of God in Jesus Christ and his

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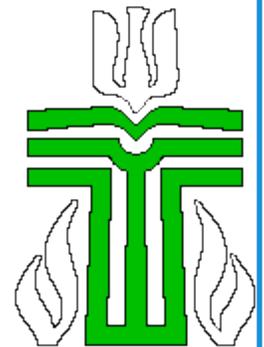
passion and resurrection. Because of its association with Presbyterian history, the Celtic cross was chosen as a model for this contemporary rendering of the ancient symbol.

In experimenting with the basic lines and shapes of the cross, the contour of a book began to emerge in the horizontal section, and the two center lines of the cross became the representation of an open book. This integration of the horizontal dimensions of the cross with the book motif highlights the emphasis which the Reformed tradition has placed on the role of Scripture as a means of knowing God's word.

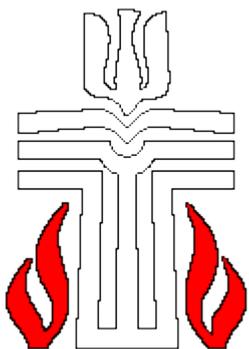


The slightly-flared shape of the Celtic cross also makes possible the transforming of the uppermost section into the shape of a descending dove. As a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the dove is intimately tied to the representation of the Bible, affirming the role of the Spirit in both inspiring and interpreting Scripture in the life of the church. The dove also symbolizes Christ's baptism by John and the peace and wholeness which his death and resurrection bring to a broken world.

Beneath the image of the book is the suggestion of a lectern or pulpit, which captures the important role of preaching in the history of Presbyterian worship.



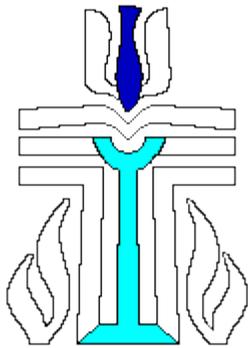
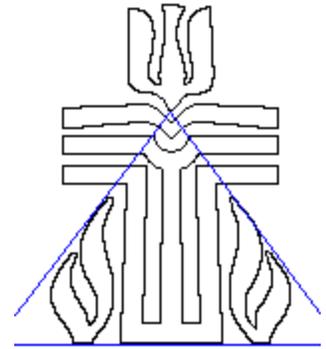
Integrated into the lower part of the design are flames which form



an implied triangle, a traditional symbol of the Trinity. The flames themselves convey a double meaning: a symbol of revelation in the Old Testament when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush and a suggestion of the beginning of the Christian church when Christ manifested himself to his apostles at Pentecost and charged them to be messengers of the good news of God's love.

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The triangle also suggests the nature of Presbyterian government, with its concern for balance and order, dividing authority between ministers of the Word and laypersons and between different governing bodies. This understanding of the church was based in part on an important idea in Reformed theology, the covenant, which God establishes with people to affirm God's enduring love and to call us to faith and obedience to Jesus Christ.



Looking more closely at some of the visual components of the design, viewers may discover elements that seem to fuse with some of the more obvious theological symbols. In the shape of the descending dove, for example, one might also discern in the body of the bird, the form of a fish, an early-Christian sign for Christ, recalling his ministry to those who hunger. For some, the overall design evokes the calligraphy of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Others have seen a baptismal font or a communion chalice (cup).

In 1 Corinthians, Paul described the church as a body with many members, illustrating the pluralism of the church and the many gifts which God gives to its members. So also the seal's individual parts, when taken together, form an encompassing visual and symbolic unity, while not exhausting the richness of possible interpretations.

For more information about the seal design, you may want to order the book [Sealed in Christ](#) by John Mulder.

Attendance for May

May 7th: **31**

May 14th: **29**

May 21st: **28**

May 28th: **32**

McPherson Women's Prison Ministry Resumes!



"When I Was in Prison" statue by Timothy P. Schmalz

Karen F will be attending a Kairos (prison ministry) reunion at McPherson women's prison on **June 9**. This will be the first big gathering since Covid began. If you'd like to support the ministry, **you can buy a large pack of cookies for snacks** (no fruit filling or powdered sugar allowed). You may also **purchase a \$10 meal ticket** to help defray the cost of lunch for the ladies. Please pray for this event and for the ministry. Thank you!



Our community food and clothing distribution ministry could always use snacks, especially tuna and chicken salad meals, Vienna sausages, granola bars, individually packaged servings of snack crackers, ramen noodles, fruit gummies, protein bars, bagged snacks, any portable snacks, razors, toothbrushes, shampoo, and socks. You may bring them to the room across the hall from the church office. Thank you!



Keeping God's House Clean

Please consider signing up on the tablet in the west lobby to help clean the church one weekend this month. We can do it if we all pitch in!

The Ordinary Time Acts of Kindness Challenge

“Ordinary Time comprises all the days [on the ecclesiastical calendar] not marked by a specific season [such as Christmas or Lent]. Those periods in between holidays give us time to catch our breath and return to regular life. [Ordinary Time] stretches on for 27 to 29 Sundays (not counting the Sundays of the Transfiguration, All Saints and the Trinity).

Ordinary Time is a time for us to discover that in Christ; our lives are filled with grace, forgiveness and hope. We live as people of faith, ‘new creations in Christ,’ not just on Christmas and Easter, but also during the times in between where most of life takes place.” (Excerpt from *Presbyterians Today*, July 3, 2020.

[“Ordinary Time is Extra-Ordinary”](#) by Kathleen Long Bostrum)

We were called during our sermon at First Presbyterian Church on May 28th to participate in the **Ordinary Time Acts of Kindness Challenge**. We will try to share ordinary acts of extraordinary kindness at least once per week during Ordinary Time.

Here is the first report from one of our participants in the Challenge:

“My first one this week: I got in my truck to leave the Sherwood Walmart and I saw a lady in a Jeep across the parking lane with a perplexed look on her face. Behind her vehicle a Walmart employee gathering carts had left a line of carts behind her car while he pushed another row of carts to the store. She was trapped! I pushed the carts out of her way so she could get out . She gave a ‘Thank you and I hope you have a blessed day!’”

If you have inspiring stories from this challenge, please email them to the office or call and leave a message. We’d love to share them anonymously in the next newsletter. Let’s encourage one another to good works!

Cinco De Mayo!

The Community Lunch and Church Potluck in May was themed for Cinco De Mayo. Great fellowship and delicious food was shared with all!



Cinco De Mayo, continued



Our next monthly Community Lunch/churchwide potluck will be on **June 4th from 11:30-12:30**. We will be serving hot potluck dishes and friendship in a welcoming environment.

Want to Be Involved?

Bring a potluck dish to share. Plan to wear festive clothes and celebrate together with our neighbors so that they can feel the love of community as we have been blessed to know it. You can also sign up to help with set up, clean up or serving by using the sign-up sheet near the offering plate at church.



Help Us Spread the Word

Help us spread the word by sharing this information in places the local public might gather: other churches, community centers, the library, gas stations, and grocery stores. If you need flyers to hand out, please let us know!

The Session will meet at 1 pm on June 10th.

Bible Book Study

Join us for lively discussion and snacks each Wednesday at 10 am in the church parlor.
Everyone is invited to come.

The Presbyterian Women's Circle

will meet at 10 am on June 20th . Join us!

Covering Our Church, Communities, and World With Prayer

- Pray for all families and people affected by the tornadoes in our city, state, and in Alabama and Mississippi
- Pray for cooperation among churches and the government in Jacksonville to address the burgeoning needs of our people.
- Pray for our police officers and firefighters in Jacksonville as they try to deal with growing need, natural disasters, and homelessness.
- Pray for the families in need in our community and for the donors who have supplied food, water, toiletries, clothing, and bedding for those families.
- Pray for our Community Lunch Program, its volunteers, and the people it serves.
- Pray for the people of Ukraine and the leaders whose decisions affect peace in the region.
- Pray for the leaders of our nation, state, city, church, and communities.
- Pray for those affected by disasters in Turkey and Syria.
- Pray for all teachers, bus drivers, students, and school employees, especially those in our city.

Pentecost Worship

We wore red to the Pentecost service to celebrate the power of the Holy Spirit in the world and the work of the Spirit as it empowers us to be God's hands and feet.



Individual Prayer Requests From May

Barbara M

Katie and Dylan W

Kainan S

Heather F

Karyn P

Kara N

Barbie M

Amie S

Wendell P

Donna E

Jerry Deen D

Randy N

Steven and Elizabeth P

Harvey P

Rod B

Greg T

Michael K

Bob F

Britnee L

Beth's uncle, David G

Brian C

Becky J

Bill P

Jeff S

Chris S

Danny R

Barbara and Paul J

Michael R

Billie Ann M

Buck B

Catherine C and family

Stephanie P



Nothing Can Separate
Us From the Love of God
Romans 8:31-39

Contact Us
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*May the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out
your hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart open your
heart to love.
And as you leave this place, may you see the face of Christ on
everyone you meet, and may everyone you meet see the face
of Christ on you.*

First Presbyterian Church
1208 West Main Street
Jacksonville, AR 72076

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

If you are receiving this newsletter by mistake or would rather get one at the church in person, please let us know. If you know of someone who would like to receive this newsletter in the mail, please call us at 501-982-2876. God Bless You!